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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Commissioner of the State Prison,

FOR THE

STATE OF WISCONSIN,

FOR THE YEAR 1855.



MADISON:
CALKINS & PROUDFIT, PRINTERS.

1856.



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R E P O R T.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM A. BARSTOW,

Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

SIR—In accordance with the requirements of sec. 6 of chapter 477, of the Session Laws of 1852, the undersigned presents the following report of the affairs and conditions of the State Prison for the year 1855.

Whole number of convicts confined in the prison from January 1st, 1855, to December 1st, 1855, 117

Of which number there were here, Jan. 1st, 1855, 71

Number of convicts received in the prison from January 1st, 1855, to January 1st, 1856, 46

Number of males received during the year, 43

Ditto females do. do. 3

Number of convicts discharged on expiration of their sentence, 8

Number discharged on the Governor's pardon,	40
Ditto do. by order of the Supreme Court,	1
Number of deaths,	1
Whole number discharged during the year,	45
Number of male convicts discharged,	41
Ditto females do. do.	4
Of those convicts that were here on the 1st of Jan. 1855, there were discharged on the pardon of the Governor,	37
Of the convicts who were here on the 1st of Jan. 1855, there were discharged on expiration of sentence,	3
Of the convicts received here during the year, there were discharged on pardon, and by order of the Supreme Court,	4
Number of prisoners pardoned one day before the expira- tion of their sentence,	26
Number pardoned from one month to two years before the expiration of their sentence,	14
Number of male prisoners now here,	68
Ditto female prisoners do.	4
Whole No. of prisoners now here, Dec. 31, 1855,	72

Counties from which the Prisoners were sent.

Milwaukee,	41	Fond du Lac,	2
Marquette,	2	Columbia,	1
Dodge,	3	Adams,	1
Rock,	2	Bad Ax,	1
Racine,	1	Ozaukee,	3
Kenosha,	1	Jackson,	1
Waukesha,	4	Pierce,	1
Dane,	2	Winnebago,	1
I wa,	1	La Crosse,	1
Walworth,	3		

Crimes of which the Prisoners here were Sentenced.

Murder in first degree—eight of which are sentenced for life, and one for ten years,	9
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Murder in second degree and sentenced for life,	2
Murder in third degree,	1
Assault with intent to kill,	1
Manslaughter in first degree,	5
Burglary,	4
Rape,	6
Assault with intent to commit a rape,	1
Larceny,	25
Embezzlement,	3
Arson,	1
Poisoning well,	1
Adultery with daughter,	1
Burglary, larceny, and assault with intent to kill,	1
Burglary with intent to murder,	1
Passing counterfeit money,	1
Assault with dangerous weapons with intent to steal,	1
Larceny in warehouse,	1
Larceny in shop,	2
Breaking into house with intent to steal and murder,	1
Burglary with intent to murder,	1
Stealing,	3
Grand larceny,	1
Receiving stolen goods,	1
Total	72

Trade or occupation of the Prisoners now here.

Carpenters,	3	Barber,	1
Farmers,	20	Bookbinder,	1
Blacksmiths,	3	Weaver,	1
Shoemakers,	2	Physician,	1
Painter,	1	Clerks in store,	3
Pedlar,	1	Shingle maker,	1
Engineer,	1	Saloon-keeper,	1
Sailors,	7	Brewer,	1
Tinsmith,	1	Clotheir,	1
Cooks,	2	Printer,	1

Clergyman,	1	Teamsters,	3
Seamstress,	2	Tavern keeper,	1
Laborers,	2	Masons,	3
Cabinet Maker,	1	Tailor,	1
Butchers,	3	No trade,	1
Overseer of railroad,	1		

Places of Nativity of the Prisoners now here.

United States,	36
Ireland,	13
England,	3
German States,	17
Wales,	1
France,	1
Atlantic Ocean,	1
Total,	72

Ages of the Prisoners now here.

From 14 to 15 years of age,	1
" 15 " 20 "	0
" 20 " 30 "	29
" 30 " 40 "	12
" 40 " 50 "	9
" 50 " 60 "	7
" 60 " 70 "	5

No. that can read,	70
" " cannot read,	2

No. that can read and write,	65
" " cannot write,	7

72

It will be recollected that at the last session of the Legislature, an act was passed, and approved April 2nd, requiring the Commissioner to let out to the highest and best bidder, the services of the convicts in the several mechanic shops of the Prison; and to commence the construction of the main or centre building of the Prison with the convict labor at his disposal. Accordingly, after advertising for proposals as the law requires, on the 10th of May last, the proposals for the labor of the mechanic convicts, rough stone, lime sand, and team work to haul away the excavations of the basements and foundation of the main building, were opened. When it was found that 55 cents per day had been offered by Messrs. Whitney and Danforth for the labor of the convicts in the carpenter's shop, and a contract having two years to run, with the privilege of three, on their part by their giving the Commissioner 90 days' notice in writing to that effect, was entered into with those gentlemen on the 15th day of May last. But one proposition for the mechanic convicts in the tin shop was received, and that at so low a price that I thought it my duty to reject it. No proposition was received for the services of the mechanic convicts in the shoe or paint shops.

Subsequently, however, to wit: on the 29th day of May last, I entered into a contract having thirteen months to run with Messrs. Starkweather & Elmore for the labor of the mechanics in the tin-shop, at an average rate of about 48 cents per day, including apprentices, of which there are two. And on the 21st day of June, I entered into a contract, having one year to run with the privilege of two, with Messrs. Mensink & Bolland for the labor of the convicts in the shoe shop, at the rate of 60 cents per day for those who are masters of the trade, and 25 cents per day for apprentices for the first six months.

The convicts in the above mentioned shops are all that have been hired out to contractors, under the provisions of the law above referred to; and it will be found upon inspection, that the contracts most effectually protect the rights and interest of the State.

On the 14th of May last, in compliance with the requirements of the law approved 2nd of April last, I began excavating for the foundation and basement walls of the main building of the new Prison, but soon found that it would be impossible for me to procure teams to haul away the earth in excavating, and furnish rough stone, lime sand, lumber and other articles necessary for its construction without money; and to add to my embarrassment, the contractor for furnishing the Prison with beef, pork, lumber, corn meal and charcoal, threw up his contract, and positively refused to furnish us with neither of those articles, until he was paid for what he had furnished. Being unable to procure the money from the State Treasurer to meet his just demand and to purchase provisions for the prisoners, and other articles necessary to keep them at their work, I did not hesitate to sell the appropriation made by the last Legislature to pay the debts of and for the support of the prison the current year.

The following statement will show the amount of money received by me from from all sources during the current year, and the disbursements of the same. It will be seen that I have charged myself with the full amount of appropriations sold, and credited myself with the sum paid for discount in the disbursements.

Jany. 11, Rec'd from State Treasurer the balance of appropriations of 1854,	\$4,379 45
do 27, Rec'd from State Treasurer on appropriation to pay past indebtedness,	200 00
March 8, Rec'd from State Treasurer, on same appropriation,	2,000 00
do 23, do do do	1,800 00
do 28, Gave Hobkirk & Co., a draft to pay for acceptances and merchandise of 1854, payable out of same appropriation,	2,275 41
Amount rec'd from the prison shops, contractors for convict labor, &c.,	1,200 00
Total amount of money received,	11,854 86

April 13, Sold balance of appropriations to pay past in-	
debtedness,	6,502 08
Sept. 7, Sold appropriation to pay expenses of the cur-	
rent year 1855,	13,000 00
	31,356 04

Disbursements.

Am't paid on indebtedness of prison, for 1854,	17,336 20
Leaving a balance of all money rec'd to be expended on	
expenses of current year,	14,020 74

Which balance has been expended as follows :

Amount paid officers for services,	\$5000 00
“ “ for lime for main building,	304 00
“ “ “ sand,	375 00
“ “ “ rubble stone,	450 00
“ “ “ block stone,	750 00
“ “ “ locks south wing,	308 23
“ “ prisoners on their discharge,	100 00
“ “ the chaplain,	30 00
“ “ the physician,	50 00
“ “ for iron work of main building,	51 63
“ “ to masons for labor on main building,	137 00
“ “ for discount on appropriations and drafts,	2539 39
“ “ paid for improving roof to south wing,	10 00
“ “ for team work in excavating basement	
to main building and cistern,	150 00
“ “ for wood, provisions, merchandise, stock	
and tools for shops, postage, &c.,	3765 47
	\$14,020 74
Amount paid on indebtedness of prison for 1855,	17,336 20
For all of which proper vouchers are on file in the	
commissioners office,	\$31,356 94

The following statement will show the indebtedness of the Prison for the current year:

Amount of indebtedness of the Prison for the current year, 1855,	\$9,291 30
Of which amount there is due on officers' labor,	\$1,917 05
On prison physician's account,	300 59
On chaplain's account,	185 50
On Dr. Look's acc't, for services rendered as prison physician, and for lumber furnished in 1853, under ex-Com. Brown, allowed on affidavits of three men employed as officers at that time,	119 68
Block and rough stone and team work,	1,627 09
Wood, provisions, merchandize, &c.,	1,552 32
Lime, sand, and labor on main building,	384 33
Due on indebtedness of 1854,	88 29
Stone coal,	116 45
	\$9,291 30

The following statements will show the improvements which have been made within the prison yard by convict labor, and the earnings of the convicts in the various shops, as also the property now on hand, which has been purchased during the year. All of which is presented as offsets to the indebtedness of the current year.

Am't of convict labor done on main builing,	\$3,675 70
Oistern joining south wing, containing 1200 bbls., the walls built of Rubble masonry and plastered with water lime,	450 00
Dressed stone on hand,	2,030 00
Undressed do	2,225 00
Work made to order in prison shops,	417 00
Stone dressed to order and sold from stone shop,	408 42
Labor done in tin shop for Starkweather & Co., contractors,	417 92

Labor done in carpenter shop for Whitney & Co.,	do	511 43
do in shoe shop for Mensink & Co.,	do	301 25
do for contractors, in finishing of south wing		
for J. N. Ackerman, contractor,		535 34
do Wm. Reinhard,	do	208 79
do A. Proudfit	do	231 53
do John Taylor,	do	56 98
Iron	on hand in blacksmith shop,	1,540 00
Scrap iron	do do	15 00
Cast steel	do do	14 30
Prepared work	do do	37 70
Corn, potatoes, &c., raised on prison farm,		600 00
Flour, corn, meal and provisions on hand,		150 00
Clothing, cloth and bedding	do	250 00
Hogs, large and small,	do,	65 00
Prepared work on hand in carpenter's shop,		46 00
Cistern pumps,		6 00
Lumber on hand,		125 00
Stone coal	do	5 00
Chloride of lime on hand,		7 00
Stock in paint shop	do	40 00
Tools purchased for the several shops,		125 00
Improvements in office, warden and matrons apart- ments, stone shop, paint shop, out-building, vaults and drains,		150 00
To sacking for bedstead in south wing and putting on the same,		250 00
Furniture, &c., for south wing,		75 00
Outstanding debts collectable,		477 41
		\$15,477 80
Amount of moneys received to be expended on ex- penses of current year brought forward,		14,020 74
Indebtedness brought forward,		9,291 30
Assets deducted,		23,312 04
		15,484 80
Cost of supporting the Prison the current year,		\$7,827 24

The expenses of the Prison the past year has been greatly augmented in consequence of the very high prices of block stone, provisions and firewood, being nearly 40 per cent. higher than the preceding year. The cost of warming the prison is no inconsiderable sum, and will continue to advance as the demands for fuel increase. The cost of block stone the past year has been from \$22 50 to \$25 per cord, and the price of good stone will continue to increase.

Estimate made out the current year for the Contractors engaged in building the south wing of the new Prison, as also all other outlays, showing the cost of finishing the same:

Estimate of J. N. Ackerman, made July 30th, 1855, convict labor and 20 per cent. deducted,	\$ 57 27
Estimate of J. N. Ackerman, made July 30th, 1855,	169 51
Final estimate of J. N. Ackerman, made Nov. 24th; the 20 per cent. which was deducted from former estimates, added,	842 52
Estimate of A. Proudfit, made Jan. 30th, convict labor, 20 per cent, and pay for superintendent of stone shop, deducted,	105 92
Final estimate of A. Proudfit, made Dec. 1st, additions made,	1,222 69
Estimate of J. S. Sherwood, for iron, made out to him Nov. 20th,	3,246 89
Estimate of Wm. Reinhard, made Jan. 30, paid by ap- propriation last winter,	1,020 82
Estimate of John Taylor, made May 30th	210 60
do of M. Dahl, for locks for south wing,	308 25
Lumber for a walk for fourth story,	84 00
Dressing and laying the same,	25 00
Making door-frames and hanging doors in octagon cells,	8 75
Altering door to main entrance,	3 00
Improving roof,	10 00
	\$7,815 22

In commencing the erection of the main building, I thought best to extend its width to seventy feet, thus making it twenty feet wider than was originally intended, its dimensions now being eighty feet in length by seventy in width, the foundation walls are four feet thick, laid in mortar and sunk ten feet below the surface and resting, like the walls of the south wing, on solid rock. The height of wall laid the past season is fourteen feet six inches.—The whole has been under the charge of J. M. Schrouk, and is a most excellent piece of work.

The following statement will show the expenditures on the building as far as erected, and amount of labor performed by convicts on the same :

Rough wall laid 1716 perch at \$2 50 per perch,	4,290 00
Cut stone wall laid 69 do 10 50 do	724 50
Caps, sills and steps 24 do 10 50 do	252 00
Team work and labor in excavating,	1,000 00
Iron for grating windows, 1,623 lbs. at 7 cts. per lb.	113 61
Ratliffe's bill for working the same,	48 69
Fitting and letting in do	15 00
Four ventilators,	5 00
Lumber for window frames, and making same,	45 00
	\$6,493 80

From which deduct,	
Amount paid for lime and sand,	824 60
For services of two masons to instruct convicts	401 45
Stone in the rough,	1,119 75
For iron and lumber, and working same,	217 30
Ventilators,	5 00
Team work,	250 00
	\$2,818 10

Which would leave amount of labor performed by convicts, \$3,675 70

The following Statement will show the amounts of money received by me to pay Convicts for over-work and the Disbursements of the same, as also the amount now due them on estimates made to the Contractors for building the South Wing, the current year, (1855):

Received in 1854, from all sources chargeable to \$25,000, appropriation of same year to build the South Wing,	\$2,117 08
Sold appropriation of 1855, to pay prisoners for over-work,	2,813 14
	\$4,930 52
Deduct from amount paid for discount on appropriation of 1855,	168 81
	\$4,761 71
Amount paid to Convicts for over-work,	4,577 38
Leaving a bal. of all money rec'd by me yet unpaid,	\$184 33
There is now due Convicts on estimates made the current year, previous to the repeal of the law to pay Convicts for over-work, for building the South Wing, for which no appropriation has been made,	\$472 82

* The health of the prisoners the past year, like the preceding one, has been remarkably good. Only one prisoner has died in the two years I have had charge of the prison; and no accidents of a serious nature has happened to either officers or prisoners. Our success in preserving the health of the prisoners is mainly attributable to the skill and promptitude of the Prison physician.

The library of the prison has been, through the liberality of the American Bible Societies of New York and Chicago, and ——— Packard, Esq., of Philadelphia, and now numbers upwards of 500 volumes. A large share of this collection are of a religious character, such as Bibles, English and German, Testaments, Hymn and Singing Books. Most of the convicts appear to take

a lively interest in reading, and in the religious services on the Sabbath. And the moral and intellectual training of the prisoners has not been neglected the past year by the worthy and faithful chaplain of the prison, Rev. Samuel Smith.

We have been, and still are, destitute of a hospital and chapel for the Prison; besides the provisions for the prisoners have to be cooked in the old prison, and carried from thence a distance of some ten rods, in all weather and at all seasons of the year, making it very inconvenient and unsafe, as those employed in cooking have to be let out of their cells in the winter season, one and a-half hours before day light, and when no guards are on the fence, in order to get the breakfast of the prisoners ready in season to go to work by day light.

I would therefore, most earnestly recommend that an appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars be made to complete the main building the coming season, which sum I have no doubt would be sufficient for that purpose, if the work was done by convicts. It is also of the greatest importance that some other place than a State Prison should be provided for children from 9 to 15 years of age. Since my connection with the prison four boys of the ages above referred to have been sent here, and I am well satisfied that the associations of a State Prison are not of that character to produce a reformation in their conduct.

Again, I wish to impress upon the mind of your Excellency the very great necessity that exists for paying for what is purchased for the use of the prison when it is bought. If that could be done, and comfortable and convenient shops were erected, so each mechanical branch could be carried on separate and every thing connected with the convicts could be reduced to a perfect system, instead of two or three trades being carried on in one small room, the prison would be a source of revenue to the State instead of a bill of expense.

Before closing this Report, I wish to say, that I am truly sensible that I have committed errors, but they are of that character

that I could not avoid, under the circumstances. And while I admit I have committed errors, I also claim that no man ever held the office of Prison Commissioner under more trying or embarrassing circumstances; and yet, during the two years I have had charge of the prison, but one prisoner has died,—none escaped, nor has there been an attempt to escape; and although in punishing, I have never, in a single instance, resorted to the lash, the yoke, or shower bath, still I believe the convicts in the Wisconsin State Prison behave as well, and do as much labor, and are under as strict discipline as any other prison in the Union.

Hoping that what we have done will meet the approbation of your Excellency, the Honorable the Legislature, and the people generally, I remain, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

A. W. STARKS,

Commissioner.

Waupun, Dec. 31st, 1855.

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }
County of Dodge, } ss. A. W. Starks, being duly sworn, says that the matters and statements set forth in the foregoing Report, by him subscribed, are just and correct, according to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief.

A. W. STARKS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this
third day of January, 1856.

JOHN WARE,
Notary Public.